

John Tremper House
3 North Front Street
Kingston
Ulster County
New York

HABS No. NY-5557

HABS,
NY,
56-KING,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5557

JOHN TREMPER HOUSE

Location: 3 North Front Street, Kingston, Ulster
County, New York

Latitude 41° 56' 07" Longitude 74° 01' 10"

Present Owner: Urban Renewal Agency.

Present Occupant: Unoccupied.

Present Use: None.

Significance: This is a large, formerly elegant building,
typical of the Federal houses with classical
details built after the turn of the nineteenth
century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: According to local histories the house was built in 1802.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

1802 Deed: 12 April 1802, Recorded: 20 June 1802
liber 16, page 407
Henry Sleght, sheriff for
Peter Wyncoop, Jr.

to

John Tremper

Property included a "stone dwelling house."
This Wyncoop house, one of the buildings burned
in the Revolution, was probably incorporated in
the Tremper house.

1814 John Tremper died 21 May 1814

1818 Deed: 31 January 1818, Recorded: 4 February
1818

liber 22, page 545

Catherine Tremper, widow of John

John Tremper, deceased

to

Maria Tillotson, wife of

John C. Tillotson

1828 Deed: 1 May 1828, Recorded: 29 October 1828
liber 33, page 534

John C. Tillotson
Maria Tillotson, his wife
to
James Mairs

1833 Deed: 7 May 1833, Recorded: 17 April 1834
liber 40, page 614
James Mairs
Stella Mairs, his wife
to
Rodolphus B. Hubbard

1834 Deed: 16 April 1834, Recorded: 17 April 1834
liber 42, page 368
Rodolphus B. Hubbard
Mary E. Hubbard, his wife
to
William Cockburn

1838 Will written: 2 February 1838, Proved:
19 March 1838
liber I of wills, page 244
William Cockburn
to
Ann Cockburn, widow of deceased
Howard, James, and Margaret Elizabeth, children
of the deceased. Ann Cockburn and William Sickles
to keep an inventory.

1846 Deed: 4 September 1846, Recorded: 11 September
1846
liber 66, page 250
Ann Sickles, executrix of will of
William Cockburn, deceased
to
Charles W. Shaffer

1856 Deed: 1 April 1856, Recorded: 17 June 1856
liber 96, page 626
Charles W. Schaffer
to
James S. Evans

1869 Deed: 1 November 1869, Recorded: 4 November
1869
liber 159, page 341
George M. Gries, executor
Mary D.W. Evans, executrix and widow of
James S. Evans, deceased
to
Frederick E. Westbrook

1886 Deed: 28 April 1886, Recorded: 21 October
1886
liber 266, page 542

John W. Walsh, a referee appointed by court for
Frederick E. Westbrook
Marius Schoonmaker
Peter R. Elting
to
Mitchel Valentine

1887 Deed: 19 March 1887, Recorded: 21 April 1887
liber 270, page 371
Mitchel Valentine
to
Elizabeth V. W. Schoonmaker

1922 Deed: 6 February 1922, Recorded: 16 February
1922
liber 487, page 198
Ella S. Darrow, sole surviving executrix of
will of Elizabeth V. W. Schoonmaker, deceased
to
Ray G. Huling
Jane W. Huling, his wife

1922 Deed: 6 February 1922, Recorded: 16 February
1922
liber 487, page 196
Virginia L. Schoonmaker, administrator of
will of Matilda R. Schoonmaker, deceased
to
Ray G. Huling
Jane W. Huling, his wife

1937 Deed: 28 May 1937, Recorded: 3 June 1937
liber 588, page 331
Ray G. Huling
Jane W. Huling, his wife
to
Chester Lyons
Dorothy M. Lyons, his wife

1956 Deed: 31 August 1956, Recorded: 27 September
1956
liber 980, page 437
Chester Lyons
Dorothy M. Lyons, his wife
to
Hubert Richter
Seymour Werbalowsky
and
Nathaniel B. Gross, all for half-interest

1968 Deed: 29 January 1968, Recorded: 30 January
1968
liber 1207, page 1118
Nathaniel B. Gross
to
Hubert A. Richter
Seymour Werbalowsky

1970 Deed: 30 November 1970, Recorded: 1 December
1970
liber 1252, page 46
Hubert A. Richter
Seymour Werbalowsky
to
Kingston Urban Renewal Agency

4. Builders, contractor, suppliers: Not known.
5. Original plan and construction: Early local historians George Sharpe and Marius Schoonmaker disagree as to whether John Tremper incorporated the Wyncoop house in his new house or built to the east of the old house. Deeds for the property from 1795 (liber 16, pages 403 and 405) and 1802 clearly indicate that there was a stone dwelling house on the property. Doors and windows in the basement and a closed-up opening in the one story stone wall through the middle of the house seem to indicate that John Tremper incorporated part of the Wyncoop house in his new house.
6. Alterations and additions: A photograph dated 1871 shows the house with its original pyramidal roof. The cornice, doorway, and louvered shutters on the second floor were painted a dark color. The windows and paneled shutters on the first floor were painted a light color. The house itself appears to have been stuccoed and painted a color of medium tan. There was a straight stairway to the front and what appears to have been an iron fence across the front.
An undated photograph probably from the mid-1870s shows the mansard roof gabled, gabled dormers and a new cornice added for Frederick E. Westbrook. The body of the house and the trim were painted a light color.
Another photograph from before 1883 shows that by that date a one story porch with Ionic columns had been added to the front and the whole building painted a light color.

The Hulings, who bought the building in 1922, renovated it. The front and side porches have been removed and various additions made in this century.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Maria Tillotson, the second owner of the house, was the daughter of Chancellor Livingston. While the Tillotsons owned the house they apparently continued to keep their residence in Rhinebeck, New York.

It is unclear just what the building was used for in the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1871 Directory of Kingston, Frederick E. Westbrook, a New York lawyer who also owned the Old Senate House which he gave to the State of New York, is listed as living at the corner of North Front and East Front (Clinton Avenue) Streets. He apparently moved to New York City soon afterwards.

By the 1890s the building was a boarding house. When it was sold in 1922 it was known as "The Hudson", but it was also known as Hudson Apartments. Later it was called Senate House Apartments.

The Hulings trained seals for circuses.

6. Sources of Information:

1. Old views:

- a. A photocopy of old photo shows the south (front) facade circa 1860-1870. The original pyramidal roof is visible. Included in the HABS collection.
- b. A photocopy of old photo shows the south (front) facade in the circa mid-1870s. The mansard roof is visible. Included in the HABS collection.
- c. A photocopy of old photo shows the front facade hidden by trees. It dates from circa 1883 and includes the porch with Ionic columns. Included in the HABS collection.

2. Bibliography

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deeds, County Clerk's Office, Ulster County Office Building,
Kingston, New York

Notes on houses and lots, by R.R. Hoes, Senate House Museum, Kingsto

Interview, Agnes Scott Smith, retired teacher, 189
Fair Street, Kingston, New York

Wills, Surrogate's Office, Ulster County, Office Building,
Kingston, New York

b. Secondary and published sources:

Anjou, Gustave. Ulster County, New York, Probate Records,
Volumes I and II. New York, 1906.

Clearwater, Alphonso T. The History of Ulster County. King-
ston, New York, 1907.

Commemorative Biographical Record of Ulster County, New York
Chicago, 1896.

De Lisser, R. Lionel. Pictureque Ulster. Kingston, New York.
1896.

Schoonmaker, Marius. The History of Kingston, New York. New
York, 1888.

Sylvester, Nathaniel Bartlett. History of Ulster County, New
York. Philadelphia, 1880.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The house was one of the classically designed buildings in Kingston erected in the period after the Revolutionary War.
2. Condition of fabric: The house is in poor condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The house measures 48' (five-bay front) x 46' with side and rear additions. It is two-and-a-half stories with a basement.
2. Foundation: The house sits on a stone foundation.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The front of the house and half of both sides are rubble masonry and stuccoed. The other half of the sides and the rear is wood frame construction with clapboard siding. The whole building is painted a cool gray color.
4. Structural system, framing: The house's structural system consists of stone walls on the front and wood framing on the back. It has a truss roof.
5. Porches: No porch exists although there was once a one-story porch with Ionic columns on the front. There is an existing stone landing and stair that were added later.
6. Chimneys: There are four brick chimneys symmetrically placed on both sides of the building.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is recessed into the stone wall in the center bay and has a half circular transom on top with four panes. The door molding is elegant and above it is a molded wooden keystone.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Wooden double-hung windows are same size in the front and are six over six light sash. Dormer windows are double-hung two over two light sash. They line up in all bays.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The house has a mansard roof.
 - b. Cornice: There is a modillion cornice of later design with an overhanging cavetto and fascia.
 - c. Dormers: There are five gabled dormers in the center of the

front elevation and three on each side and rear.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement plan consists of a stair hall and four stone rooms, two of which are divided up by wood partitions or partitions made up of lath and plaster. All of these stone rooms contain large supports for the four chimneys of the house. Only one of these has indications of having had a fireplace and possibly an oven in the northeast room. This room also contains an exterior door and a furnace.
 - b. First floor: The main entrance is in the center bay and enters directly into a central stair hall. On either side of this hall are two large rooms both containing large fireplaces at the opposite end from the doors. Directly through the stair hall is a large rectangular room (possibly a dining room) with closets cutting off the corners of the room on the south. There were apparently two smaller rooms with fireplaces on either side of this room; however at the present time these rooms have been divided up to make smaller areas. There are additions on the northeast rear of the house and a three-room addition all along the west side of the structure.
 - c. Second floor: The plan is similar to the first floor. The stair hall is now partitioned off on this floor so that there is a wall and a door at the south edge of the opening of the stair well. There are two small bedrooms on the southwest and one large bedroom on the southeast which corresponds with the parlor below. The front of the stair hall becomes a closed off antechamber on the level and are lighted by the window over the main door. The rear of the house on this level contains two medium sized rooms with fireplaces which correspond with each other on either side of two smaller rooms. The northwest corner contains a much later addition.
 - d. Third floor: This floor is essentially an attic with rooms fitted into a nineteenth century mansarded addition. It is reached by an enclosed flight of stairs which lead off the second floor stair hall. There is a third floor stair hall from which bedrooms and bath open off. Most of these rooms contain temporary partitions and at present the fabric has been much abused.
2. Stairways: The principal stair is an open-well stair although the second floor part of the well has been closed in. Many slender tapered balusters and the newel posts exist. It also has a molded hand-rail. There are wooden scroll stair brackets leading up to the second floor. The stair from the second to the third floor is much wider and the railing much heavier machine turned wood. The stair to the basement is directly beneath the main stair and has heavy wood treads that are well worn.

3. Flooring: The basement has a cement finished concrete floor. The first and second floors have narrow hardwood tongue-and-groove flooring over the older wider board flooring. Many of the rooms have linoleum cover.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most rooms have plaster walls with wall-paper coverings. Ceilings are acoustical tile and patterned tin.
5. Doorways and doors: The basement doors are board and batten. Its frames are simple with a bead molding and have wooden peg joints. Rooms on the first floor have finely paneled doors and molded trim. In some places (southwest room and center north room) there are wooden entablature overdoors with applied molded plaster ornament of a Classical design. The second floor also has paneled doors with much more simplified molded trim. The third floor is filled with late nineteenth century thinner doors and standard machine molded trim. Double doors that once went from stair hall to southeast parlor were found in the house.
6. Trim: Northwest parlor ceilings have gesso duro border. The same room and center north room have full entablature over-doors with gesso duro ornament.
7. Hardware: Some hinges on basement level are wrought-iron and a few latches and strap hinges also survive. Other floors have nineteenth century hinges, and generally modern locksets and handles.
8. Mechanical Equipment:
 - a. Heating: The four chimneys heat the principal rooms although there is no fireplace in either of the southwest bedrooms. The northwest bedroom is the only room in the house to contain an original fireplace mantel and it is a simple wooden variety. The southwest parlor has an elaborately carved marble fireplace surround. There are several wrought-iron fireplace devices found loose in the house as well as one other marble fireplace surround.
 - b. Lighting: The house is lighted by incandescent lights.

D. Site:

The building is situated directly across the street from the Senate House on the north side of the sharp turn in North Clinton Avenue where it turns into North Front Street. The structure is about seven feet from the street and the site slopes to the north and to a lesser degree to the east where a new road has been built.

Prepared by: William C. Badger
Historian
Historic American Building Survey
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) under joint sponsorship of the National Park Service and the Kingston Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission with financial assistance from the New York Council on the Arts. Measured and drawn during the summer of 1972 under the direction of John Poppeliers, chief of HABS and under the supervision of Roy Eugene Graham (University of Texas at Austin) by student architects Philip D. Ward (University of Washington), A. Carol Boerder (University of Texas at Austin), M. Morgan Gick (University of Notre Dame), and Stephen O. Fildes (Texas Tech University). The drawings were edited in December 1972 by architect John Burns. The written architectural and historical data was prepared by William C. Badger (University of Pennsylvania), the project historian, and edited in January 1980 by Susan McCown, a historian in the HABS office. The photos were taken in August 1973 by Jack E. Boucher of HABS staff.